1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[The Island and Seafaring Greeks]

the warm morning sunshine, to watch the sailors of the numerous passenger and cargo ships work aboard ship and then relax in the tiny sea-front cafés, and to talk with the families of those whose most energetic sons are away at sea, is an introduction to a world incomprehensible to many peasants in Central and Northern Greece and strange to the inland American. For me, the best hours of all were those spent along the quay of a busy port with a retired sea captain, telling the tales of his misadventures — a 1950 version of the trials of Odysseus. All of these seafarers, fishermen, and merchant seamen, crews and captains and their island-anchored families, are a part of the rainbow in the rock. Yet they, along with the city Greeks, so similar in vitality but different in their life, make up only half of the people of Greece. The other half are rural. It is with this largest single group that we shall concern ourselves.

The Greek Villager

Being rural in Greece means living in a village, which is usually a picturesque collection of houses, lanes, gardens, orchards, vineyards, and fields. It also means that one is a peasant, since the Greek terms *choriates, chorikos,* derived from the word *choria* (village), are the closest approximations of *peasant* in the Greek language. But any Westerner, in seeking to understand the rural Greek, needs to divest himself of many false notions about the nature of a peasantry, be these on the romantic side of overidealization or on the derogatory plane of considering them mere bearers of burdens and dull plodders through life.[10]

In not all countries do peasants always live in villages, but they do in Greece. Therefore, in examining social life throughout the Greek mainland, away from the cities, we can use *villager, peasant,* and *rural population* interchangeably, feeling that if we understand Greek village life, we also shall have gained a point of comparison for the study of peasantries in other countries.

The importance of the small village in Greek life can best be shown by a few figures taken from the 1951 census. For instance, 44.6 percent — or almost half of the Greek people — lived in 5,473 communes, or local political units, of less than 2,000 inhabitants. At the other extreme was Athens, whose population included 18 percent of the nation's total; by 1961 it had reached 22 percent. Since 1940 there has been a definite drift toward Athens and the twenty other towns which in 1940 had a population of over 20,000. Despite this urban trend, one must still recognize that the small village is an imposing aspect of Greek life which deserves far more attention than it has received in the past.

Although rural people today are increasingly drawn to the city, the peasant in years past has been a man of the land, usually suspicious of city ways. And herein lies a question: are these millions of peasants, following a daily

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

them now and begin to live in their homes. But within a few years they would be strong enough to come down and take all their former fields away from us. Where would we be then? No, we'll get along as best we can."

This story, as did those gathered from many later visits to numerous villages, illustrates the economic distinctions between the mountain and the plains villages. Life in the uplands is more self-subsistent, if for no other reason than the difficulty of getting crops such as figs and apricots to market. Cash crops figure much less prominently. But in spite of the economic disadvantages of the mountain villages, many of their people understand their common cause with the people of the plains.

A group of social-work students at Pierce College near Athens was asked to distinguish between the plains and mountain villages. Since these students came from villages in every region of Greece, the list of characteristics they prepared is of some value in indicating what village people think the distinctions are:

Mountain villagers	*Plains villagers*
Change slowly	Accept change, adapt better
Physically tough	Refined in manners
More hospitable	More sophisticated
Stubborn	Cunning
Happier, more optimistic	Sad (Thessaly)
Have deeper thoughts	
More intermarriage of kin	

An additional observation made by a successful Athens businessman, who was born in a mountain village, highlighted some of the advantages that the plains village has over the place from which he came: "For instance, water has been brought close to the houses in the plains so the people don't have to carry it so far; electricity has come in; new means of communication enable them to travel around; those teaching new methods of agriculture can visit to tell them what to plant and when to plant it."

Despite their isolation, the mountain people are considered by many Greeks to be brighter and more active than those of the plains. Indeed, many mountain villages are thought to have been settled by the more liberal, strongly independent inhabitants of the plain who could not support the indignities of Ottoman rule. According to one commandant of police, they are also less law-abiding. Although many of their young people habitually and successfully migrated elsewhere, most of the mountain people were contented with their simple life until the Communist guerrilla war of the 1940s made them vacate their homes for a temporary stay in market towns or cities on the plains. In spite of this exposure to easier ways, the mountain villagers still are believed to have greater fortitude and a willingness to put up with stark conditions, not simply from resigna-

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

is going on in the world." "A few of us get small cooking stoves and others electric irons." Some also add, with a twinkle in their eyes, that since they can see after dark they do not have to go to bed so early and that the birth rate will probably drop.

Where there is no electricity there may be radio sets run by batteries. In one mountain village we found that five of the eight coffeehouses had battery receiving sets which they always turned on to the newscasts. "Why," we wanted to know, "are you villagers so interested in newscasts?" "Oh, we like to hear farm prices over the radio, but most of all we like news about what is going on in foreign countries because that is what enlightens us." In some of the most out-of-the-way villages we found receiving sets run by gas motors supplied by the United States Mission. Thus the air waves are reaching the village plateia and the villagers' sense of isolation gives way to a growing demand for more of the benefits enjoyed outside the village.

The water supply in the village is quickly identified by the procession of people to and from the springs, artesian well, or street faucets. A local gendarme in his trim gray uniform, who joins our group, and a field guard on his way to leave the rifle slung over his shoulder at the community-council office are expressions of services from the national or local government, as is the mailman who comes from the next largest center once a day, or perhaps three times a week.

Our observations of the people, public buildings, and available utilities are constantly interrupted by the liveliness of the eager conversation around the café table. Although the American visitor is not directly engaged, the topics sound so interesting and so close to the facts he is trying to collect that he cannot remain entirely aloof. For instance, the young officer in charge of some people recently resettled in the Greek-Albanian border area under his control says that the peasants are complaining because their land allotment is too small and the soil too sandy, so they go into the forbidden no-man's-land to cultivate even if they do place their lives in jeopardy; a man who prides himself on knowing local history affects a learned air when he tells the history of the local church, built on the site of an ancient pagan shrine; a child, bolder than the rest, comes up to ask the woman interpreter, who is wearing slacks, whether she is a man or a woman.

Again, in a low voice, a local official inquires politely: "Who is this American professor? What is he doing in our village?" When he is told that the professor is interested in understanding the Greek people, and in telling Americans about them, he finds it hard to believe. "You mean," someone asks, "that he has come all the way from America to visit our village? Please tell the professor that we are greatly honored." One man adds, "I've lived here sixty-seven years and during none of that time has a Greek professor ever come to visit us." A woman related to the coffee-

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

on the land they farmed.[8] Despite these economic disadvantages, the Greek peasants, in the 1960s as well as in the 1920s, kept on living in villages. The talk of "saving time" has little appeal, since the villagers move in a time sequence quite unrelated to the concept of the industrialized West. They ask, "Save time for what?" As an aside, it is of interest to note that whereas the Greek villager becomes bored when one talks of saving time, he listens intently when one suggests ways of increasing his income, adding to his food supply, or helping him meet his taxes.

Another deterrent to the settlement on the independent farmsteads was noted by Henry Morgenthau, who had been United States Ambassador to Turkey (1913–16) before serving as Chairman of the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission, established by the League of Nations. He called it the "hiving" habit of Greek families, which led those coming from one village in Asia Minor to try to relocate together in a new community in Greece. His observations, though couched in superlatives, are well worth repeating:

> The Greek character has special qualities that had to be taken into account [in resettlement]. Like his ancestors, the modern Greek is an intense individualist. Interference with his personal independence, or his freedom to order his life in his own way, is sharply resented. Every Greek has his own ideas about everything and hesitates neither to express them nor to act upon them. He would be quite impossible to manage were not this disintegrating characteristic counterbalanced by his equally intense social instinct. He is the most gregarious of human beings and will not live where he cannot foregather in the evening with his fellows. The daily gatherings in the local café are as dear to the heart of the Greek as were the weekly gatherings at the meeting house to the Puritans of old — and for many of the same reasons. . . .[9]

Furthermore, as Morgenthau also pointed out, new houses could be provided much more quickly and inexpensively in a village setting than if each house had to be constructed all by itself at considerable distance from all other houses.

Reconstruction also had to be carried out after World War II and the close of the guerrilla war. Along with this there was some relocation of villages because the old sites were considered too inaccessible or the means of livelihood too precarious. One such place was Menithi, on the seacoast of Western Greece, where three hundred families were settled between 1949 and 1951. They had come from two communities in the mountains about five or six hours' walk away. Their home villages had been destroyed three times: by the Italians, then by the Germans, and finally by the Communist Antartes. The peasants were primarily agricultural and livestock producers but knew nothing of the sea. As we talked with them in the plateia, within a stone's throw of the sea, some of the men asked, "What do we shepherds know about fishing?" and others, with disgust in their

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

166 361 727 voices, questioned: "Just how would a fisherman know how to guard livestock?" The new site had been chosen because it was sheltered, near the water, and on the road. The houses had been provided free by the Ministry of Reconstruction, each being set in a plot of four hundred square meters in which a small vegetable garden was possible. As the surrounding cropland was insufficient to support all of these families, the men had to go far away in search of jobs while leaving the women and children behind.

361 727 178 In the beginning of the reconstruction period, private contractors were given the task of rebuilding the destroyed villages and in some cases put up shoddy dwellings in a location where people did not want to live. Some of these stand today between Lamia and Volos abandoned, mute testimony to the failure of projects carried out without consulting those supposed to benefit from them. But most of the postwar villages are now inhabited and contrast, because of their straight streets and their houses in a perfect line, with the older villages where the streets wander and each individual put up his house on his lot as it pleased him.

361 Location, however, is more complex than some of the peasants' explanations or the contractors' choices would imply. It usually represents over a long period of time an adjustment to the resources which people need for their livelihood. First of all, there must be water available for drinking [312] and washing. Should a spring upon which everyone depended dry up, the people of the village would move, ghosts or no ghosts, particularly if the women got tired of carrying water from some unreasonable distance. Over a period of time, also, the peasants locate their settlements as a compromise between the requirements for wood and pastures on heights above the village and the need for daily travel to their fields lying below. That is why villages are so frequently perched on a hillside instead of on the level land beneath. Of course, if the plain is large and the hills distant from land owned by the peasants, they will build a village on the plain and make long trips for their wood. Another factor affecting location in the days of Turkish rule was the villager's desire to be off the main road and thus less subject to taxation by officials and to requisition of foodstuffs by passing troops. He valued his freedom. Those old villages are now suffering from the isolation which was once a blessing. But many of the people still cling to residence in the old village in preference to separate farms because of the protection a village gives against wild animals and predatory armies, and because neighbors help each other to cultivate the earth. A further reason for the long survival of the village was its suitability to the system of large landholdings prevalent through much of Greece before the liberation from the Turks. Estate owners or managers could better control and supervise the rural workers whose houses were conveniently grouped together. Nowadays, according to those engaged in community development, better provisions for schools, roads, medical services, mail, and other

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

423 178 241 earth" is a term really descriptive of the average peasant holding of less than 10 acres, too small an area to support the average family of 5 people who try to live from its products. Put another way, 37 percent of the farms have an area of less than 2.5 acres, and 51 percent comprise from 2.5 to 12.5 acres.[1]

369 181 432 As peasants come more and more into the orbit of the city, as they substitute commercial values for their traditional agrarian values, the bond with the land loosens and their attitude toward the land undergoes a change.[2] Where it once was a sacred heritage to be preserved and passed on intact to posterity, the land tends to become a commodity to be bought and sold; and the peasant becomes a farmer, whom one approaches differently from a peasant, for his attitudes and values are different. Such differences are described more fully later as part of the summing up of social changes noted in Greece.

121 178 423 432 There was no way of finding out what changes were occurring among the villagers in the various regions of Greece except to talk with them and with those who work with them. Few studies had been made. People in Athens, both Greek and American, guessed and speculated, sometimes shrewdly, but no one could do more than point out that change was occurring. So I had to go into the provinces and see for myself, being careful to visit areas which Greeks generally agreed differed markedly from each other. Some areas have become much more like the city than other areas, more farmer than peasant. Others are much more in the classic peasant mold of Hesiod's day.[3]

Far in the northwest corner of Greece, in Epirus, the director of agriculture said:

178 423 432 The rural people here do not part willingly with their land. On the contrary, because the plots are small, they are always trying to increase the size of their holdings. At the same time, the people here have a strong trait of localism. They may be offered a larger tract in another part of Greece in keeping with some of our current resettlement programs, but the Epirote is reluctant to leave. 186 He prefers to live on a poverty margin in the area that he knows and loves 166 rather than to follow the promise of a better existence elsewhere.

511 578 One clue to the importance of land to the Epirote is the quarrels that families and even villages have about it. Within one hour of Ioannina there are three villages which have been arguing over a tiny bit of land for three months. Although the land is so rocky that it is useful only for pasture, a representative had to be sent to Constantinople to search the old records to see to whom the land really belonged.

369 It also happens quite frequently that Epirotes who move to Athens, and even settle there permanently, becoming quite prosperous, won't relinquish the fields that they own back here. They, too, still sense a certain security in the possession of land.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Moving eastward across Northern Greece, I learned from the agricultural officials of Serrai (in Macedonia) that more and more unwilling people there were being forced to get rid of their farms and go down to the cities. This is not because of any lack of love for the soil but because the yields in the mountainous areas make it impossible to earn a living. Economic necessity has forced a change of location, but not yet a change in attitude. One official compared Macedonia and Thessaly, with respect to attachment for the land: "I would say that there has been much greater security through the years in Thessaly, which has led to more fondness for their fields; here in Northern Greece the constant uprooting of families has created an uneasiness and therefore a tendency for people to part with their land."

In Thrace, farther eastward, the peasant is still attached to the soil but "he is not stuck to it absolutely body and soul," as one peasant expressed it. These areas of Macedonia and parts of Thrace depend largely on growing Oriental tobacco, a commodity sometimes moving slowly on world markets, with agricultural depression a serious consequence. Here the man-land bond is loosening.

The peasants living at the head of the Chalkidike peninsula (central Macedonia) around Polygyros, the capital of the prefecture, enjoy relative prosperity and are not willing to leave their land. Nor is there any desire to emigrate, although five or six families have sent sons to Italy to study agriculture and veterinary science in the expectation that they would return better prepared to improve agriculture and kindred pursuits.

In the rich plains of Thessaly, south from Macedonia, the mechanization of agriculture is apparent everywhere. When harvests are good, people are optimistic about the future, secure about their food supply. Peasants there have invested heavily in tractors, which have had an interesting effect on attitudes toward the land. In this area of good soil, where scientific farming is increasingly practiced, the basis of the attachment is changing from the traditional idea of land ownership as a sacred trust closely bound in with the fortune of one's immediate family to a view of land as a source of financial gain. Here in Thessaly the rural man is changing from peasant to farmer, in contrast to the hard-pressed people in the northern mountains who are forced to move to cities for bread and, far away from their land, still cling to peasant values.

When a peasant in Central Greece was asked what a family from his village would do if it received $500 from America, he said: "A man would be more apt to buy fields rather than improve his home; of course, if his house leaks and he has enough land, he would start with the house but, generally speaking, a peasant from my village thinks it more important to own more land than to build a big house. Of course, we do have another

1:Sanders Z-5,N (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

178 423 432 type among us — the 'chewer' who would squander the $500 right and left in the hope that the next year the cousin in the United States would send some more money in answer to a plea of distress!"

[454] [369] Here, then, is what one might call an illustration of a normal process of change in attitude, the peasant becoming the farmer. When the house rather than the accumulation of more land begins to be stressed, the farmer is moving to "city ways." Throughout the south, in the Peloponnesos, the younger people seem more ready to move cityward than do their elders, who still insist that one should hold onto the land.

[166] [593] In Northern Greece when there is a shift from the land the whole family, young and old, moves together, whereas in the Peloponnesos the young people make the move on their own. This seems to indicate that when the traditional attitude toward land changes, another basic change in peasant life is occurring — in family relationships.[4] However, everywhere in the [463] southern villages, as elsewhere in the country, the village shopkeeper, barber, shoemaker, and other artisans, as well as the priest, all own land which they farm if they can find the time; if not, some member of their family works it instead.

178 423 432 184 On the basis, then, of dozens of interviews — only a small sampling has been quoted — carried out in thirteen thousand miles of travel in the provinces, some generalizations may be attempted. Wide regional variations are apparent. One may generalize, though conscious of many exceptions, that peasants on fairly good soil which they work with their time-honored methods by hand and not by machines hold strongly to the belief [114] that the earth and the earth alone is their treasure and their great security. On the other hand, where peasants in Northern Greece and elsewhere live [166] in areas frequently troubled by war, or on marginal land, they will reluctantly accept a chance to move away from their family fields — even to the cities. But those who sold their land before the war and lost all of their money because of devaluation now appreciate the worth of land even more. In the fertile plains where mechanization has come, the attitude toward land corresponds more to that in Western Europe and the United States: it becomes a commodity rather than a part of the family heritage. [369] In areas of high education and of long-time contact with the city, such as in much of the Peloponnesos or in Attica, the urban values and attitudes as to land and family have so permeated the thinking of the young that they prefer nonfarm work when this can be found, abandoning the emphasis their elders still place upon "the good earth" as treasure, security, and heritage.[5]

The Cycle of Land Ownership (Attica)

423 369 Whatever the quality of the villager's attachment to his fields is now, he always has had, and still has, an intimacy with his fields that the city

1:Sanders Z-514 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Vlachs EH15
Sarakatsani EH14

health. A third effect is that agriculture is almost impossible and is in consequence despised. Finally, home comforts must be portable. That is why an abundance of rugs, blankets, carpets, and cushions seen in these migrations is a sign of wealth.

But what of the Sarakatsani, the Greek-speaking group? [10] Already on a recent drive between Thebes, Lamia, and Volos, cities in Boeotia and Thessaly, I had looked down from the winding mountain roads into their small winter settlements of conical reed huts and circular reed sheepfolds. As we had passed we found the men and boys with their flocks not far from the road. We stopped to pass the time of day.

"How is the pasture this year?"

"Not very good" was the cautious reply.

"Are you Koutso-Vlachs or Sarakatsani?"

"We are Sarakatsani, but we also are Greeks."

Nearer Volos we found that the Sarakatsani, who originally had their huts just on the outskirts of the village, had settled down, building permanent homes. It was a striking contrast to see the reed hut a few feet away from the square mud-brick and mud-plaster house and to know that in case the family got too large some of the members would retire to the old hut and get along very well.

It was in Kalpaki, however, a settlement beyond Ioannina toward the Albanian border, at the edge of the Iron Curtain, that we enjoyed true Sarakatsani hospitality. Actually a Greek peasant village, its members had been increased by the forty Sarakatsani families settling there since the war, primarily to take advantage of the land left untilled by people moving away from disturbed frontier conditions. These forty families really had another village, Kato-Pethini, one-and-a-half-hours walking distance farther up the mountains, where they had their stone houses — something exceptional for those supposed to be Skenites (tent dwellers). Since they were working the fields around Kalpaki, it was here they now lived all the year around, apparently content with their reed houses, most of which followed a rectangular pattern rather than the more common circular shape. The women handled most of the agricultural tasks, but the men went back to the old Kato-Pethini with the flocks and returned to Kalpaki every ten or fifteen days for a change of clothing and a bath. Konstantin, a twenty-two-year-old youth whom we found grazing his sheep around the edges of the cultivated Kalpaki fields, had come down below with his flock for that purpose.

He invited us into the hut to meet his mother and sisters. We first entered the anteroom of the simple reed structure, from which chickens flew out as we came in. There we saw the woolly puppies that would grow up to be the menacing sheep dogs so necessary for the shepherd when alone with his flock. There also was the inevitable water barrel and near the cooking hearth the *ghastra*, the dome-shaped cover that is like a dutch oven. We

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

178 727 669 166 World War II and the guerrilla war which followed constituted another major social upheaval. Whereas the Nazi forces often wreaked vengeance for sabotage upon settlements close to the main thoroughfares, the Communist forces stayed away from the main highways and brought disaster to mountain villages, such as Valtetsi in the Peloponnesos (Chapter 6). All countries occupied by an enemy suffer social as well as economic disorganization, but the case of Greece was aggravated by the nature of the guerrilla war. In order to protect the exposed rural people and to curb the unwilling (and sometimes willing) support of the Communist forces by the villagers upon whom the guerrillas descended for food and supplies, the central government in Athens removed a number of villagers, estimated at from 700,000 to 750,000, from their homes to quarters near some town or city. Because this was a temporary resettlement, most of the villagers did [657] not become incorporated into the local economy, which was not able to utilize such a volume of labor; instead, these migrants were supported by government subsidy which provided a bare minimum of services. But, as [369] earlier chapters have shown, this exposure of from one to two years to the city had a profound psychological impact upon the women and young people. The women learned that there was an "easier" life; the young people got many new ideas about dress and beauty aids, entertainment, types of indoor jobs, and patterns of greater independence from their parents. One girl who had worked in a factory in Salonica felt ashamed to carry water when she went back to her village, and moreover she wanted a regular income.

[831] [302] According to a prominent Greek child-welfare worker, the changes following the guerrilla war ranged from shifts in such basic values as virginity, with this being less highly esteemed than before the war, to the presence of bobbed hair and permanents in villagers where they had never been seen before. Before the war, such changes had been gradual; now they came suddenly. George Sakellopoulos, the inspector of agriculture in Ioannina, summarized very clearly the impact of this population displacement for his area:

[515] During the guerrilla war the people had to go to the towns. They lived in homes much better than they had known before. They learned to wash themselves, which many had not done before. When they were persuaded to go back to their villages, they took back the changes they had seen. Many of them went back reluctantly. While they were refugees they had a subsidy. When that was [657] cut off, they could no longer remain in the town house, for they could not pay the owner, who could kick them out. A free distribution of flour was made in the village, and not in the town, so they had to go back to the village to receive it. Then the tractor operators said they would plow only the fields of those who were actually in the village; even the army helped with the plowing. At first, there were some who stayed behind in the towns because their children were in school, but eventually the families were brought together again in the village.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

part of the peasant population could be successfully transferred elsewhere, this would merely cause a shortage of labour in the fields under the present system of exploitation. A great part of the cultivated area would remain fallow and only be used for grazing. . . . In the tobacco villages the problem would be the reduction of the labour peaks in the spring and summer: these require all the labour available and even cause a fairly extensive seasonal migration. Mechanization might bring about some decrease in the April and May peaks. The result would be that more seasonal female labour would be needed for tobacco planting. The labour peak in August is caused by the tobacco harvest and this work cannot be mechanized or simplified. If the holdings are enlarged, more female labour would have to be attracted; on the other hand, however, the production per farm unit of the cash crops tobacco and wheat . . . would be augmented, thus increasing local prosperity.[4]

178 433 464 241

In the second village studied, one located in the Megalopolis Basin, de Vooys and Piket were impressed by its remarkably deserted appearance. Many houses were unoccupied, abandoned terraces betrayed former vine growing, and bushes had grown up on formerly tilled fields. Why has this come about in a country where land is so scarce?

The agricultural unit was originally based on two cornerstones: growing grain and keeping sheep. Self-sufficiency was remarkably developed; only the sale of surplus products — derived from the sheep — supplied a scanty money income. When finally a money economy penetrated here, the inhabitants reacted to it by mass emigration: especially the younger generation moved away. At first this lightened the population pressures, but when the migration process persisted, it soon became clear that the consequences were serious. The older people eventually died and the land was left to descendants who lived elsewhere. When these heirs lived far off, either in Athens or abroad, they had little interest in such legacies. They neglected the land and permitted the other villagers to use it as common pasture.[5]

[166]

The writers conclude that only a radical change in the labor processes (mechanization and simultaneous enlargement of the holdings) and changes in the attitude of the peasants (enabling the founding of cooperative societies, together with the immigration of young families into this region, will turn this area around Megalopolis into a prosperous one. Thus we see the close connection between population shifts, economic trends, and social change.

Another factor affecting change in the village is the family head's economic ability to make the changes he would like. The Greek peasants, though numbering more than half (55 percent) of the total population, receive about 45 percent of the total national income.[6] The per-capita income of the 900,000 farm families runs lower than the national average of $185 per year, a figure permitting only minimal improvements, no matter how strong the desire.

178 434 [162]

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

1

The Village: As a Setting

THE VILLAGE OF VASILIKA lies almost at the foot of Mt. Parnassos on the Boeotian plain. The oldest of its fifty-odd houses were built in the late nineteenth century by the grandfathers of some of the now adult villagers. Most of them came from the village of Parori two miles to the northeast. Until 1933, when Vasilika sued for and won separate status, the two settlements were classified by the central government as one community (*kinotis*). The parent village still has the larger population, with some 700 inhabitants, while Vasilika, in 1955–1956, had 216.

Both Vasilika and Parori have come to be called by these names only since 1955. During the Turkish occupation, and for more than a century after the liberation of the region, the Boeotian villages used the names the Turks had assigned to them. Parori was Biskeni Aghas; Vasilika was Kravasaras. But in the last decade, patriotic considerations have led to a change from the old names to ones based on Greek roots. *Parori,* in Greek, means "near a mountain" and is an appropriate name for a village which rests in the foothills of Parnassos. *Vasilika* means "royal" and was the name of a hill in the region where a famous battle against the Turks was fought. In some cases, the names by which the villages were known in classical Greek times were restored. Drachmani, for example, once again became Elatia.

Most of the villagers of Vasilika, in 1961, still called the village "Kravasaras." Indeed, the new sign pointing to the dirt road which leads into the settlement reads *Kravasaras,* in spite of the designation of the village in the provincial records as *Vasilika.* This type of double nomenclature is common in the entire region. The wives of Vasilika, most of whom come from the surrounding Boeotian villages, frequently refer to their former houses by their older Turkish names. These are the names which evoke for them the emotions associated with "my village." Their husbands, on the other hand, often refer to their wives' home villages by the newly given names. An outsider must resign himself to learning the double nomenclature if he is to avoid utter confusion.

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

Specialization of Labor

233 563 166 463 434 Sheepherding as a specialty is relatively new to the village. Eight of Vasilika's ten shepherds and the members of their households are called *Vlachi* by the villagers. Most of these people come from Agrafa, in Euritania, in the northwestern part of the Greek mainland. Their fathers and grandfathers were shepherds, and the present group in Vasilika is the first generation ever to have settled anywhere with the intention and reasonable hope of staying. They augment the income from their own flocks by caring for those of the farmers as well.

233 563 511 434 464 262 342 From the point of view of the *Vlach* shepherd households headed by men (two are headed by widows), the settlement in Vasilika is a satisfactory change in their circumstances. In the years between 1950 and 1956, they had succeeded in building up their own flocks to the point where the sale of sheep, milk, and wool enabled them to have a small cash income to add to the money their women earned as hired agricultural labor. With a cash income, their diet no longer needed to be restricted largely to bread and cheese. The houses of the shepherds have improved since 1956. By 1961, all the shepherds' families were in houses instead of reed huts, and two of them were living in their own newly built one-room brick houses.

233 563 621 555 871 641 435 Perhaps most important to the shepherds' sense of well-being is that they have been admitted to citizenship in the *kinotis* of Vasilika, and that their children are receiving an education. The adult men had had to teach themselves and their children just enough reading and writing to be able to keep track of their commercial transactions through the year. Indeed, one shepherd, when asked what he thought about when he was out alone with his sheep, replied that he spent most of the time calculating how many sheep and how much milk to sell under the different possible price conditions of the coming season. What pleases the shepherds in Vasilika is that their children will have, as a result of a more formal education, some opportunities to follow a calling other than that of shepherd. In 1961, one of the shepherd's sons had already successfully completed a year at the gymnasium. Some of their daughters have married into the farm families of Vasilika, and even if these farmers are among the less prosperous in the village, such a marriage conveys prestige on the girl and her family in the eyes of the shepherd community.

233 563 571 621 Finally, the shepherds are grateful for the fact that several of them are settled in the same village and that it is possible for them sometimes to herd their flocks together. They are less lonely—they have company (*parea*)—and to have companions to talk to is considered a basic good by all the people of Vasilika.

463 445 In the first chapter, the movement of itinerant traders, vendors, artisans, and professionals into Vasilika was mentioned. The village has no resident carpenters, stonemasons, saddle-makers, barbers, tailors, or doctors; but the very existence of such specialists and the expectation that they will come from time to time, demonstrate an important characteristic of the household economy of

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
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share of the land at the time of their marriage, the shares remaining for the sons will be too small to enable them to support their future wives and children, the family recognizes the problem and tries to make some adjustment that will prevent the threatened poverty. The villagers are well aware of the dangers of land fragmentation under a system of equal inheritance. The average land holding in Vasilika is already only one-third to one-fourth of what it was at the time the village was settled. Thanks to the introduction of irrigation and improvements in agricultural techniques (see Chapters 2 and 3), both the bulk of yields and the cash value of the crops in the area have increased to the point at which the farmers maintain a higher standard of living on the smaller holdings than their grandfathers did on the more extensive ones. But the process has its limits, and the future possibility of economically useless small holdings is a real hazard for Vasilika's families.

One kind of solution to its problem is for a family to try to train or educate its "surplus" sons for a nonfarming occupation; if possible, one that will send them to the towns and cities as white-collar workers or as professional men. This effort, however, is more than merely a solution to a recognized problem. Status as an urbanite has very high value for the villagers in its own right. As the previous chapter has shown, the families of Vasilika try to import urban ways into the village; their efforts to send their own sons and daughters directly into the towns and cities may now be discussed. For quite apart from the necessities of their situation, the people of Vasilika act as if they assumed that life in towns and cities is superior to life in a small village. This judgment is not based on a belief that there is necessarily greater economic well-being in the towns. On the contrary, the villagers believe it is more difficult to achieve a respectable standard in the larger centers and, indeed, that the plight of the poor is worse in the town than in the village. They say it is harder to have little when one is tempted by so much. But the villagers respect an educated man; education enables a person to pursue occupations which the villagers believe have greater prestige than farming, and the preponderance of these occupations are practiced in towns. Not only white-collar workers but also journalists, lawyers, doctors, writers, gymnasium and university professors congregate in the provincial towns and in Athens (cf. Antonakaki 1955:93). Even if a young man from Vasilika is not fortunate enough to work in one of these favored occupations—even if he is a tailor or a barber or an artisan of another type, or a small merchant—he is believed to acquire some aura of prestige simply by living in the more populous center.

The young girls of Vasilika want to marry into the towns because they are well aware of the greater physical ease and comfort available there and contrast these conditions favorably with the arduous and endless labor they are accustomed to in the village.

Still another incentive for gaining the status of a town dweller is the belief, in Vasilika, that life in town is more full of adventure and less monotonous than life in the village. Besides, the towns and Athens have crowds, and *polis cosmos* (many people) are enjoyed by the villagers for their own sake. A *paniyiri* or Easter is considered successful in proportion to the number of people

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

are said to have neither brains nor self-control. Parents with marriageable children were, therefore, in 1961, contemplating the division of their estates into fewer portions than their parents had done before them.

As his children are growing up, a farmer calculates approximately what he must give his daughter or daughters for dowries and how much will be left for each of his sons to share. If it is fairly obvious that the share left for the sons will be insufficient to support each of them, the farmer tries to make some other provision for one or more of the boys. Any boy who shows promise as a student is encouraged to continue his schooling beyond the compulsory sixth-grade elementary school in the village. Education is so highly prized that sometimes even an only son who might inherit an adequate farm is allowed to continue his education if he shows ability in academic subjects. The next step after elementary school most commonly chosen by the villagers is the six-year classical or humanistic gymnasium which serves as a necessary base for any civil service or white-collar post, and also for further study in the university or in specialized advanced technical schools. Although there are some private gymnasia, most of the farmers of Vasilika have sent their sons to the virtually free public institutions (Antonakaki 1955:39). These are in the provincial towns or in Athens, so that although there is little tuition charge, the farmer must pay for his son's board and room, for his school supplies, and for adequate clothing. Whenever possible, children are boarded with an aunt or uncle who lives in the town, but even under these conditions, farmers pay a fee to the relatives to cover the cost of their children's care. Sometimes, to keep food costs down, a mother prepares a basket of bread, cheese, and perhaps a vegetable stew for her son, places it in the bus bound for the town in which the boy goes to school, and the boy picks up the basket at the bus depot.

Whatever the particular arrangement, schooling involves an expenditure of current income, and the farmers consider that the cost of educating a son is about equivalent to a major portion of his share of the inheritance. The Greek Civil Code makes a specific provision for this view by declaring that educational expenses beyond those normally to be expected from the economic position of the family may be counted as part of the inheritance (Section 1895). In Vasilika it is assumed that a gymnasium-educated young man will spend the rest of his life living in some town, and that he will receive only a token share of the land after his father's death or at the time of the division of the estate. His parents, brothers, and sisters remaining in the villages as farmers gain in social stature and in potential actual advantage from his residence in town in a prestige-giving occupation. Both the legal code and village custom, then, involve the recognition that when farmers or shepherds undertake to educate their sons beyond the village school, they are striving for an improved status position in the nation as a whole, and that if sons succeed in the new prestige-giving occupation, they are the agents of upward social mobility for the family. Among Vasilika's land-owning farmers, an educated son gives the village the added advantage of a larger amount of land to divide among the remaining children. For farmers and shepherds who have very small land holdings or none at all, the

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
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sacrifices necessary to keep an academically talented son in the gymnasium are undertaken with enthusiasm, because such a son gives promise both of increasing the income of his family and of raising its social position.

Although not all of Vasilika's boys who start the gymnasium have sufficient talent or self-discipline to complete the course, a majority of them do so and give observable evidence of the feasibility of sending boys for advanced schooling. In 1959, of the thirty-four boys and young men who were between the ages of twelve and thirty and who were also sons of farmers, sixteen had attended or were then attending gymnasium, and three of the sixteen had received or were still receiving some education at a higher level. By 1961, as we have seen, a shepherd's boy had completed a year in gymnasium. Whether all these sons will succeed in finding employment commensurate with their educational qualifications depends, of course, on the economic development of the nation, and especially on the increased possibilities for employment in the towns and in Athens. In Vasilika each educated young man and his family hope that he will not have to return to the village to live.

The pattern of educating sons is not a new one in the village. With few exceptions, the groups of middle-aged brothers and of young adult brothers and sisters in the village in 1961 could boast of one additional brother who was living in a town or in Athens, and each of these men had had some education beyond the village school. There were also two men in this age group who were living in the village but had had some gymnasium training.

A second solution to the problem of surplus sons well known in the history of Greece has been emigration out of the country itself. In the decade between 1910 and 1920 about four young men left Vasilika for the United States. One of these returned to fight in the Balkan Wars of 1912 and has lived in the village ever since. The other three are still in the United States. In the 1930's, one man left with his wife and child for Tanganyika. The extent of continuing association with these overseas relatives is different in each case; one man returned to Vasilika to visit his brother in the early 1950's and stayed for only a year; another wrote sporadically; a third disappeared and his son knew only that he had died in the States. The Tanganyika relatives, however, continually sent packages to their village cousins, and the son of the original emigré, who had died, returned to the village with his mother in 1959. The villagers always referred to the packages from Tanganyika as gifts from America and referred to the Tanganyikan, even after his return, as "the American." Apparently, the word "America" in the village is a generic term for an El Dorado abroad. However, emigration out of the country is not currently of interest to the villagers; no one in the village ever asked us for help in arranging the emigration of one of their sons to the United States, though joking references to our taking young people back with us were not uncommon.

Up to this point, then, we may conclude that the system of equal inheritance of property and the villagers' approval of urban living have led to an actual geographical movement of young men out of Vasilika and to a social movement into occupations other than farming for young men who have grown up in the rural settlement. Another aspect of the situation is that income from

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land directly supports boys who live in towns both during their years in school and until they find a job. The possible importance of this for the urban economy of Greece will be discussed again in connection with dower wealth that is transferred to the cities.

Dowering the Daughter

The dowry shall be discussed first as the social mechanism by which daughters inherit property at marriage, and second as a mechanism for social mobility. In Vasilika, parents are obligated to arrange marriages for their children, and with few exceptions they do so. They most frequently look for spouses outside of the village. They expect that a girl will leave the village to live with her husband and that a farming son will bring his wife to Vasilika to live with him (technically, patrilocal residence). In Vasilika, when the villagers speak of the engagement of a man or a woman, they say, "He (she) has become engaged in Mirali;" or in Sfaka, or in Athens, or in whatever village or town the prospective spouse comes from. They explain the prevalence of exogamy, to which the phrase just quoted gives linguistic expression, by saying that it is too difficult to find, inside Vasilika, anyone who is sufficiently distantly related to be eligible for marriage.

The custom of the village prohibits marriage between relatives on both the mother's and father's side to the degree of third cousin. In a village with a total population of 216, in which there are six sets of adult brothers and one group of three men whose fathers were brothers, there will certainly be limits to the number of boys and girls eligible to marry each other. The number of families connected by kin ties in the village is even larger, however, because in each generation there are some marriages that do take place among fellow villagers and this, of course, relates some of the village's children to each other through their mother's line, even if their fathers have no paternal relatives in Vasilika. Kinship connections are further extended within the village by the ceremonial kinship ties of godparenthood. On the ground that any godparental relationship between two individuals automatically places not only the individuals concerned but both their elementary families into close kin relations, the Greek Orthodox Church prohibits marriages between the two families to the same degree that would be necessary if they were consanguineal; that is, blood relatives.

When a daughter is to be married, the father of the girl is believed to have ultimate responsibility for giving the dowry. However, the brothers' interests are involved, the mother is deeply concerned about the future of her daughter, and certainly the girl herself wants to know something about her prospects. In the informal discussions that go on within the family, everyone participates and expresses his point of view. The father alone, however, has the formal responsibility for conducting the negotiations which are always carried on with the aid of a *proksenitis* or *proksinitra* (marriage intermediary). In the Boeotian countryside, this person (either a man or a woman) is a friend or relative, either

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika,

of the dowry. Rents are high and earnings relatively low in cities so that houses are a good investment. However, since building materials must be bought, and contractors paid, in cash, the houses may take many years to build. The young couple may then move into the habitable shell, and the rest of the dwelling will be completed out of the farmer's then current income. This kind of dowry-on-the-installment-plan becomes part of the marriage contract. It is often a source not only of continuing long-term discussions between a farmer and his town son-in-law, but also a source of quarrels—what in Greece are called *fasaries*.

The rate of movement of farmers' daughters into the towns and cities has been accelerating in the last decade, but marriages to urban husbands are not a new phenomenon. Between 1930 and 1950, at least five of Vasilika's women married "into Athens."

This type of marriage, like those discussed above in which both bride and groom are members of farm families, accelerates land sales and exchanges. The network of association which develops between Vasilika's residents and their relatives in Athens and the towns, is, however, perhaps the most important consequence of the urban marriages of village women (Friedl 1959a). In addition to the economic reasons for continuing relationships, there are several customary patterns which increase the frequency of contacts between the two groups. Lonely village mothers are grateful for visits from their married daughters and their grandchildren, and the midsummer season not uncommonly finds city women with their children back in the village visiting their parents, often for as long as a month or two. A return to one's village for Easter, sometimes for most of the Holy Week as well, is a well-known pattern in Greece. *Paniyiri* in one's *patridha* (home village) is another occasion for visiting.

Journeys in the opposite direction also occur with some frequency. Village men and women, when ill, may enter hospitals in a town in which they have sons or daughters, or brothers or sisters. Village men visit their town brothers and bring their children; occasionally a child spends a summer with his town aunt or uncle. Visits to the village or to the town usually last several days. They are made possible by still another congruent pattern of Greek culture. Neither the villagers nor their town relatives seem to have any strong need for personal privacy. Visiting relatives are bedded down on pallets when there are not enough regular beds, and it is not considered either indecent or especially uncomfortable for one or even two families to sleep in the same room. It is through this intervisiting process that so many urban traits of culture are introduced to the villagers and, indeed, that some village patterns are conserved in urban areas.

An additional consequence of the town marriages of village girls is that rural wealth derived from land flows into the cities. This wealth is an addition to what the productivity of land normally contributes to urban centers in the form of food, taxes, and the export of rural produce. A portion of the farmer's profits, through the dowry, is being used, it would seem, directly to support a part of the urban population. When the dowries are invested in housing or in small commercial enterprises, many low-salaried employees, civil service workers,

3:Friedl E-5 (1955-1956) 1959 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

However, Vasilika is an open community in still another sense. Both men and women born and raised in the village have left it for other communities, and for occupations other than farming. Education beyond the six years of compulsory schooling in the village is essential for any civil service or clerical job, and of course for any of the professions. The gymnasiums or high school-junior colleges are in the towns. The farmer who wants his son to have higher education must send him out of the village at the age of twelve with the hope that he will continue in the gymnasium for six years. Upon graduation, and after a series of examinations, a successful son may become a government employee in the tax office in Amphiklia, a post-office employee or a policeman in Athens, perhaps a teacher in a village school, or an employee in a bank. A village-bred boy sometimes returns to his own or a neighboring village as a physician. Nor is formal education the only way for a farm boy to change his occupation. In some families, sons are apprenticed to barbers or tailors, and may eventually set up shop for themselves. In recent years, young men have been drafted at the age of 21 for two years of service in the armed forces of Greece. The services not only give a young man experience of other parts of Greece, but may teach him a trade as well. This situation undoubtedly provides increased opportunities for social mobility, but it is too early for its possible permanent effects to be assessed.

Education or training beyond the village school (except for that provided by the armed forces) is expensive by Greek standards. Although the tuition charge is slight, if any, at the gymnasium, a boy must be supported in the town, and if there is no relative with whom he can live, this means a cash outlay. In spite of this fact, it is by no means only the sons of the more affluent farmers who are educated. As a matter of fact, if a farmer has sufficient land resources both to provide his daughters with adequate dowries and one of his sons with a good farm, he will keep one boy on the land. But all the sons of land-poor families may be sent for further education or training regardless of the sacrifices involved.

Upward and outward mobility is possible for girls through the dowry system and the prevailing marriage customs. Village exogamy is most usual, and a woman goes to live in her husband's village. Marriage without a dowry is almost impossible in Greece, and the value of the dowry determines the future social position of a girl and, to some extent, that of her family. The larger the dowry a man can provide, the more likely it is that he will acquire a town or city son-in-law engaged in a nonfarming occupation. There are other avenues of mobility for girls. A small proportion go to the gymnasium, and then either train to become teachers, or are considered more valuable simply because they have been educated, and can get a good husband without quite so large a dowry. Another small group goes to the provincial town or to Athens to be trained as dressmakers or beauty operators, and may return to the villages to engage in these occupations.[3] Such skills are considered real assets, and may again improve the girl's chance of a good marriage. It would not be unusual, therefore, for a farmer of Vasilika to run the farm with the help of one of his sons, to have another son in Athens as a civil servant or a tax[illegible]

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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THE WATERS OF MARAH

795 territory. Kato Nevrokopi, where the Greek Metropolitan has his
648 throne, is a large village, or *comopolis* (it had a pre-war population of
about 2,000 souls), about twelve kilometres from the frontier.[1/4] The
[162] whole of this region was evacuated by the civilian population in
722 March, 1941, when invasion seemed imminent, most of the refugees
166 taking shelter in Drama, some forty-five kilometres to the southward.
When the Germans abandoned eastern Macedonia to the Bulgars, all
who were able to do so fled to Salonica, Verroia and other towns beyond
the river Strymon. It was only after the withdrawal of the Bulgars in
the autumn of 1944 that the Greek population began to trickle back.
727 In 1949 no less than twelve of the thirty villages of the diocese were
[736] in ruins and uninhabited, and the number of the orphans was said to
[346] approach 900. Kato Nevrokopi itself, though it still bore traces of the
great battle which had raged about the forts of the Metaxas line and
their heroic defenders, had come through the years of occupation and
the more recent troubles almost unscathed, save for the deliberate
destruction of the metropolis and the school.

796 It had been arranged that the Metropolitan should celebrate the
[793] liturgy next morning at the village of Dasoto, four or five miles away,
which would be keeping its patronal festival. The day was ushered in
by bugle-calls and a great beating of drums, revealing shortly after five
o'clock that the newly-formed scout troop was already abroad. These
[233] martial noises were soon mingled with the soft ringing of a multitude
[512] of bells, as the cattle were driven out through the narrow paths between
the cottages to the dusty river bed where they assemble each morning
[493] before moving off to the pastures. By a little before seven it had become
evident that others besides ourselves were keeping the feast at Dasoto,
as a few carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes, together with some solitary
riders, rattled across the bridge and headed westwards. We followed
[487] in a jeep. Our path lay through fields of maize and tall sunflowers,
above which occasional glimpses of a blue and white flag of vast
dimensions indicated the scouts' line of march, along tracks which a
heavy shower would render impassable to anything on wheels. Dasoto
[361] came into view after a quarter of an hour; a cluster of lime-washed
[342] cottages, the church prominent amongst them, on the lower slopes of
the heavily wooded heights that surround the plateau.
[793] The parish priest and some thirty or forty men and boys had come as
far as the outskirts of the village to welcome us. The Bishop's vestments,

[1/4 i.e. Bulgarian frontier - ANALYST]

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Village Life]

they avoid infringing on the women's meeting place, though not as rigorously as the women avoid the men's coffee house.

Nearly all villages conform to these customs, and much else unites them in a common pattern of life. Yet there is a very important distinction to be made between hill villages and villages of the plains. The distinction is not simply one of altitude. Hill villages, by and large, are located in areas so barren that the population cannot raise enough food for its own consumption, whereas plains villages, as would be expected, normally produce a food surplus for sale.

The traveler in Greece, especially if he leaves the main roads behind and explores some of the rough byways of the land, will frequently be surprised to find quite large villages perched in the most improbable places, hiding in some mountain cleft far from any substantial area of cultivable land. Equally surprising is the fact that in some of the broadest and most fertile plains, like that of Thessaly for instance, villages are rather widely separated. Places can be found where cultivated fields extend in all directions yet no house or village can be seen. In such localities, the fields are often tilled by peasants who live miles away in a village nestling in foothills near the margin of the plain.

The reason for this anomalous distribution of population is largely historical. In Turkish times, if not before, life in the plains was difficult and dangerous. Soldiers and officials, as they passed to and fro, lived off the local inhabitants. Tax and rent collectors, too, were more attentive to the plains dwellers, whose fields might be expected to produce more wealth for the collector to seize upon. These plagues were less serious in the back country, away from the main lines of communication. As a result, humble villagers found it safer to live in the hills, leaving the plains comparatively empty. But there was little food to be found in the uplands, and the Turkish landowners of the plains often needed extra hands to help cultivate their broad acres.

[Village Life]

Hence a sort of symbiosis was established. A large proportion of the able-bodied men of the hill villages descended each year to the plains and worked in the fields of the Turkish landowners, then returned to their homes with wages, either in money or in kind, with which to supplement the produce of the tiny fields they had been able to carve from the mountain valleys and slopes around their homes.

Some of the hill villages developed occupational specialties,[1] sending most of their able-bodied men each year to labor as masons or carpenters wherever work was to be found. Groups of villagers sometimes walked as much as a hundred miles to and from the scene of this sort of seasonal employment. Other villages developed what might be called industrial specialties – lime burning, rug weaving, wood carving and the like – and peddled their products far and wide during the summer season. One village even developed an international trade in specially dyed red wool and cloth during the latter years of the eighteenth century, stationing agents in such cities as Vienna, Constantinople and Leipzig. The origins of the modern Greek merchant marine were similar, for sailors were easily recruited among peasant boys of the islands and coasts, who sought seasonal employment to supplement what could be produced on the family farm. [505]

Another pattern of migration should be mentioned, up into the higher mountain slopes rather than down to the plains. Each summer herds of sheep and goats were sent to pasture on the high ground, where vegetation stayed green through the summer drought, and then returned to lower altitudes when the snows fell. Quite a few hill villages specialized in sheepherding, accompanying their own sheep, and sometimes sheep entrusted to them by others as well, on this annual round.

As long as the hill villages lay between two relatively unpopulated geographic regions – the plains beneath and the peaks

[1] [During Turkish times - Analyst]

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Village Life]

361 above – these complicated arrangements worked well enough.
166 The Greek communities in the hills escaped the full rigor of
464 Turkish oppression, maintained a very considerable degree of
433 self-government, and were yet able to make a living by supplementing what they could produce in the immediate locality with what they could earn far afield.

361 Two other factors help to explain the concentration of popu-
[312] lation in the hills. One was water. Greece is a dry country in summer, and before modern well-drilling techniques were known, in many localities it was difficult or impossible to live
[164] the year around in the plains. A second factor was malaria. Until DDT came to Greece after the second world war, a very large part of the country was afflicted with chronic malaria. Hill valleys, where drainage was good, were often free of this disease when the plains were not.

361 Yet problems of water supply and the risk of malaria were
166 not enough to keep eager Greek settlers from the fat lands of
175 the plains when Turkish political control was withdrawn. On
433 the contrary, as one region after another was liberated, between 1821 and 1913, Turkish landlords and peasants left or were driven out. Land so vacated was promptly settled by Greeks, many of whom came down from hill villages, while others came from Asia Minor in 1922 and 1923, fleeing the wrath of Turkish
[563] armies. Only in western Thrace was the Turkish peasantry allowed to remain on the land in return for a guarantee from Turkey not to disturb the Greek inhabitants of Constantinople and eastern Thrace.

361 But what would happen when the Turks had been driven
464 from the scene, and the plains had been pre-empted by Greek
166 peasant communities? Clearly, this development, however sat-
178 isfying to national sentiments, spelled growing hardship for
433 those who remained behind in the ancient hill villages. A landlord with hundreds or thousands of acres might be eager to hire

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Village Life]

large numbers of men to help till his ground for him; a peasant farmer, owning thirty or forty acres, needed comparatively little outside help with his crops. Moreover, as the population of the plains villages grew, farms were subdivided, and there was less and less need of outside labor. Thus the old symbiosis between hill and plain was upset as the plains came to be more densely occupied by a peasant farming population. The hillsmen, whose numbers continued to increase, had to seek new outlets.

The major outlet they discovered was emigration overseas, especially to the United States. This was, in a sense, merely a geographic extension of the familiar pattern of going away from home to seek work. Largely for this reason, many of the Greek emigrants who came to this country – mainly between 1900 and 1924 – arrived with no intention of remaining permanently in their new environment. They hoped instead to make enough money to allow them to go back home to their village, and there buy a house and some land in order to live in the traditional style of their forefathers. Many of course stayed, finding the new life overseas more satisfactory than the old one at home; but many thousands acted upon their original plans and returned. As a result, even today when an American arrives in one of the remoter and more isolated villages of Greece, it is no uncommon thing to be met by some returned migrant who spent the best years of his youth in Chicago or New York, and can produce a few words of broken English to prove it. Richer villages in the plains, on the contrary, seldom sent men overseas. As long as the family enjoyed enough land to be able to live in the simple style to which the Greek peasants were accustomed, there was no compelling motive that would lead a man to undertake such a perilous and expensive venture.

In 1924 the United States established a quota on immigration which virtually stopped the stream of Greek migration to this country. At about the same time, most of the other countries of

[Village Life]

the world that could offer an attractive chance to an impecunious peasant boy also put legal barriers in the way, so that this escape from the deteriorating position of the hill villages of Greece was rather abruptly cut off.

Within Greece, the growth of towns and a modest development of industry, which scarcely antedated the 1920's, offered an escape for a few of the surplus hands that had appeared in the hill villages. But this was by no means adequate to take care of the problem. Not only was the growth of industry and urban occupations comparatively slow, while the rate at which the peasant population grew was high, but even more important, in 1922 and 1923 Greece was compelled to accommodate more than a million refugees from Asia Minor – people who had been uprooted from their homes by the Turks as a consequence of the war between Greece and Turkey which lasted from 1920 to 1922. Many of these refugees had followed urban occupations in Asia Minor, and clustered naturally in the larger cities of Greece, where their skills and entrepreneurial energy frequently opened paths to them which were closed to the ordinary Greek peasant seeking employment away from home.

It was therefore not surprising that Greek peasants, especially those cooped up in hill villages, exhibited a growing distress and bafflement during the 1920's and 1930's, since their traditional patterns of life no longer sufficed to bring wonted results. The world depression of the 1930's hit Greece hard, and contributed to the collapse of parliamentary government in 1936, when General John Metaxas established a dictatorship. Metaxas attempted to relieve the economic problems of the country by launching an ambitious program of public works, especially road building; and the expansion of the army and gendarmerie which he carried through also afforded careers to a number of young men from poor hill villages. But this was palliative rather than cure. When the second world war came, followed by Ital-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Town Life]

621 Even in Athens-Piraeus this pattern is observed in many of
369 the neighborhoods into which the two cities divide. The majority of Athenians live in suburbs which date back only to 1923 and the years immediately after, when tens of thousands of refugees from Asia Minor crowded into the town. Many of these communities have a strong corporate sense of their own, and live in much the same way as the smaller provincial towns
[513] already described. In the central part of Athens, however, life pursues a rhythm more or less like that of any big European city except that here, too, the midday siesta is rigorously observed. Also, new suburbs, inhabited by professional people and employees, have in recent years grown up farther from the center of town; here little of the community spirit of the older suburbs is to be found, and life rather resembles the dormitory belt of a big American city.

369 The superabundant leisure so characteristic of village life is
517 also apparent in the towns. *Cafeneions* are numerous and nearly
275 always the sidewalk tables are well filled with men who obviously have no pressing business, if indeed they have any business at all. Street corners, curbs and squares are also occupied
[435] by the poor, who cannot afford to pay for a seat by ordering a coffee, even though a modest 2½ drachmae (7 cents) will confer title to a table for an entire morning.

369 Every considerable town has a fringe of unemployed and
464 semi-employed inhabitants, many of them migrants from vil-
166 lages who have come seeking some sort of job to supplement
[434] the inadequate income from their family farms. Such persons can always go back to the village if need be, where at least they can have a roof over their heads and something to eat. Even when a man has been successful in finding regular employment in a town, and makes his home there, he often continues to maintain a connection with the village from which he, or his
[602] father or grandfather, came. Family ties are very strong in

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[Town Life]

Greece, far more so than in the United States, so that a cousin or uncle who has set himself up in town will expect to help his relatives to find a footing in town when they attempt to make the escape from the land, and will also expect to be received back into the family if dire necessity should ever compel him to abandon his town career. Family ties of this sort provide a bond between town and country, extending to the second or even the third generation.

The psychological relationship between town and country is, however, subtle and complex. A peasant regards a man who has no land as something less than a full man; at the same time, most peasants envy what they feel to be the easier, richer and more stimulating life led by townsfolk, and especially by Athenians. Town dwellers, characteristically, regard themselves as far more intelligent, better informed and more civilized than the peasants. Yet elements of peasant outlook still survive among them, particularly the burning desire to own a house and a bit of land on which to plant a grape arbor and raise flowers or a few vegetables.

In town a man's most important relations are with outsiders, while in the village, relations within the family and a circle of relatives dominate daily life. In town, people must buy and sell every day, and the market relationship is shot through with antagonism, since it appears that in any immediate situation one party's gain is the other's loss. Prolonged bargaining – typical of any purchase, even of vegetables in the street – expresses this attitude; and the chicanery and high markups generally characteristic of Greek business are a consequence of the same spirit which sees in any outsider a legitimate victim, to be fleeced if possible. In village life, where market relations are merely occasional, mutual help and cooperation within the family circle provide the matrix of daily living. To be sure, outside the family circle, Greek peasants can be just as ruthless as

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Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

423 425 The land now occupied by the villagers of Nea Eleftherohori was owned by a Turkish landlord until 1912, and worked by a group of Turkish peasants. These were harried from the land when the Greek army came north in the first Balkan war of 1912. Thereupon, some of the inhabitants of Eleftherohori, together with a large group from another similar hill village, called Katophigi, simply squatted on the vacant land. They apportioned the booty on a first-come, first-served basis, effective title depending on tillage of particular fields. Since there was plenty of land for everyone, this provoked no difficulty.

The situation was radically changed and legally stabilized in 1927 when government authorities surveyed and redistributed village property. [166] The Greek government was then engaged in settling as many as possible of the refugees who had come from Asia Minor in 1922 and 1923 on land vacated by Turks; but it was not deemed politic to drive the squatters entirely away from what they had seized. Consequently, an estimate of the fertility of the soil was made in order to determine the smallest allotment on which a single family could subsist. In Nea Eleftherohori, the allotment was fixed at 27 stremmata, i.e., 6¾ acres. To permit as many refugees as possible to find land, it was further decided that lots would be assigned only to heads of families, not, as had been done earlier in Lofiscos, to every man, married or single.

As far as the squatters, or "old settlers," were concerned, these policies did not usually involve much loss. To be sure, their holdings were reassigned and particular pieces of land changed hands, but possession was so recent that this in itself did not rouse serious resentment. Moreover, few families failed to get as much land as they had previously occupied. When it [178] became known that only heads of families could qualify for an allotment, all the boys of marriageable age, even if only seventeen or eighteen years old, hastened to find themselves wives,

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Nea Eleftherohori

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may expect to maintain or modestly increase the standard of living they have enjoyed hitherto, it is likely that discontent will remain personal and private. As yet, hard work, saving and waiting seem to promise a solution; and with such hope present discontents seem bearable. But if some day the hopes turn out to have been in vain, then one may expect to see an active movement of political dissent and revolt appear in Nea Eleftherohori once more.

As compared with Lofiscos, therefore, Nea Eleftherohori is a good deal farther along the path toward a new social and psychological adjustment of village life. The less spacious economic base from which Nea Eleftherohori started compelled an earlier and more energetic adoption of new agricultural techniques; the old-fashioned frame in which the peasant family and community flourished from time immemorial has largely been transformed or discarded; and city standards have come in, not so much in fact as in aspiration.

PALEO CORINTHOS

Paleo Corinthos, or Old Corinth, stands on the site of the ancient city, on the isthmus between the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs. The imposing mass of Acrocorinth, crowned by extensive and well-preserved Venetian fortifications, dominates the village, whereas the ruins from classical times are comparatively inconspicuous. The modern town of Corinth lies on the shore some five miles off, and has taken over the commercial functions once centered in the ancient city. Until very recently, Old Corinth remained the mere village it had been in Turkish times.

It is, however, a much larger village than either Lofiscos or Nea Eleftherohori. Its population was officially reckoned to be 1,530 in 1947; by 1956 the figure had grown to 1,850. This growth was only partly due to natural increase, for the village

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Paleo Corinthos

[Villages of the Plains]

621 had acquired sixty "heads of family," mostly migrants from hill
166 villages in the neighborhood, during the years between 1950 and 1956. Some of these immigrants brought families with them, others married into the village, but exact figures of the number of persons who have moved into the village are not available.

Nevertheless, Old Corinth definitely exhibits the pattern of internal migration which may in time allow the hillsmen of Greece to share in the rising prosperity of the villages of the plains, for migration into the community from the hills has been in part offset by another current of migration from Old Corinth into larger urban centers – either to nearby New Corinth or to Athens, some seventy miles off. Thirty-five to forty persons moved away to these centers between 1947 and 1958, according to the village president.

245 The reason for this mobility is that Old Corinth has become
439 prosperous as never before. For centuries the agriculture of the community has centered upon currants; and since the seventeenth century the major market for this crop has been in England. Commercial agriculture is therefore no novelty, but the prosperity of the village has long been heavily at the mercy of the English market, and, more recently, access to this market has depended largely upon the Australian currant crop. To cultivate, pick, dry and sort currants is a labor-consuming task; and the Australian labor shortage in the postwar years proved
[436] a remarkable blessing for Corinth. Since 1954, when devaluation of the drachma cleared the way for export, currant prices have been good.

241 This is only a small part of Corinth's good fortune. Owing
474 largely to unusually wise and energetic leadership on the part
433 of the village president, who has enjoyed a unique standing in
× 178 the community, the two cooperatives which were organized before the war and were bankrupted during it were re-established by 1952.

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Cherasia
[Hill Villages]

badly needs reforestation, and that in the long run everyone, including the people of Cherasia, will benefit from re-establishment of real forests on Mount Pelion, carry any weight among the woodcutters who feel that their rights have been ruthlessly disregarded, and their traditional way of life endangered. They do not care to be farmers, and for all their ragged poverty, despise such slavish souls as are content to labor long and hard on the land.

A deep and painful irony lies in the fact that without the bureaucratic paternalism of the government most of the people of Cherasia would, in all probability, have died during the guerrilla war. What happened in Kotta, where the arm of the government did not reach, might well have happened also in Cherasia, if the inhabitants of the village had not been evacuated to Volos in 1947 and fed there – however miserably – for two and a half years by government relief. And if the population of the village had shrunk to one third of what it actually was in 1956, then it does not seem improbable that much of the present bitterness would have dissolved, because then something like the free traditional way of life would have been possible again. Governmental intervention between 1947 and 1950 prevented the operation of the brutal old-fashioned remedy for overpopulation; but governmental intervention since 1950 has not yet sufficed (and seems unlikely to suffice in the future) to provide a tolerable life for the population that has so successfully been preserved from famine, disease and violent death.

The official records of Cherasia were in considerable confusion in 1956, and I was not able to secure satisfactory figures on the present and past population of the village. The main reason for this state of affairs is that many families are registered as inhabitants of Cherasia, but do not reside there. When the villagers were sent back to their homes, everyone was supposed to go, and officially everyone did. Actually, about twenty-five

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Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

217 families managed to escape official pressures and stayed in
•166 Volos, I was told, even though the records showed them back
[727] in the village. Similarly, a trickle of migration from the village into Volos since 1950 has gone unrecorded. With every sort of bureaucratic obstacle put in the way of legal transfer of residence from Cherasia to Volos, most of those who depart from the village simply neglect red tape and leave their names regis-
[745] tered in Cherasia. They do so not by choice, since people officially registered as living in a village like Cherasia cannot claim unemployment benefits in Volos, and if they find no work, must either starve, rely upon relatives, or return to their village until better times offer a new start in town. This, of course, is the main reason why transfer of residence is made so difficult; the government could not afford to pay unemployment benefits to all the hungry men from the hills who might swarm into town if they could secure such payments.

162 Nevertheless, the villagers all agreed that more people were
621 living in Cherasia in 1956 than had lived there before the war. A mean between conflicting estimates of the population came
[433] out close to 500 for 1956, and about 430 for 1940. The villagers
[432] reckon that their own local production supplies food for only two months in the year. The rest has to be bought with money earned by selling wood and charcoal, together with an occasional lamb from their flock.

621 Records of births and deaths were also in confusion, partly
217 because children born in Volos to parents registered in Cherasia
162 are supposed to be, but are not always in fact, entered in the
[743] village records. Partly, too, confusion arises from the custom of
[844] sending pregnant women to the Volos hospitals to give birth — a new departure in village custom, resulting from the wartime experience of living in the town, and facilitated by the existence of the new road. These children, too, sometimes escape the village registers, or are entered late. For what the figures may be

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Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

621 Ten men in the village had come back after serving with the
669 guerrillas, and were kept under informal surveillance. Some
727 forty others had not returned, and most of these were presumed dead. Thirteen who had retreated behind the iron curtain in 1949 had, however, sent letters to their relatives. The village president, who provided these statistics, was obviously well informed on these matters and clearly believed that a major part of his duties was to keep a close watch upon leftists or suspected leftists.

●166 Here, then, is a village scarcely better off than it was in 1947.
621 In spite of the expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars, de-
433 rived indirectly from American aid – indeed, *because* of such
[669] expenditure – the acute and untenable overcrowding of very poor land continues; and with it the political tensions of 1946–49 seethe, just beneath the surface. The only solution for Cherasia which seems to make any sense is to remove two thirds or more of the present population, and find land or work for them elsewhere. This has not been attempted; official policy has done just the opposite by placing barriers in the way of migration from the community.

Unfortunately, Volos, the natural outlet for the surplus popu-
[464] lation of Cherasia, was itself undergoing a first-class economic crisis in 1956.[4] The port, which is the economic heart of the

[731] 4. An earthquake which damaged many buildings in Volos rather badly
[653] in 1954 was, under the circumstances, a perverse blessing to many of the poorer families of the town. Repair and reconstruction got under way quickly, thanks to a special grant from the national budget (and assisted by a special American aid appropriation of $7 million for the purpose). This gave temporary work to many, but by 1956 this extraordinary source
[288] of employment had dwindled. At the same time, a large textile plant in the city went on part time, and discharged a large proportion of its working force, as a result of a general crisis in the Greek textile trade. Consequently, Volos was, like Cherasia, unusually clean and tidy in 1956, and unusually depressed.

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Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

city, was almost idle, so that serious unemployment was endemic in Volos, thus effectively blocking the easiest and most immediate escape for the hillsmen of Cherasia. In the Thessalian plain, villages like Lofiscos have not developed their agriculture to a level of intensity that would offer seasonal employment on a significant scale. Hence, for the time being the people of Cherasia are caught in a net scarcely of their own devising. At the same time they are stubbornly and angrily doing little or nothing to help themselves. It is not a hopeful situation, and if the general political climate of Greece should change, another guerrilla band could very likely be recruited from Cherasia without difficulty and at a moment's notice.

KARDAMILI

Kardamili lies on the sea, and can thus be described as a hill village only by looking inland, where high and barren hillsides rise abruptly from the coast, with only a small stream and a miniature delta to explain the location of the community. It is situated on the west coast of the central peninsula of the southern Peloponnese. Just to the south lies the wild and desolate country of Mani, a region where tribal organization and blood feud lasted into the twentieth century.

Kardamili raises a little wheat in the stream delta, but its major crop is olives. The rocky hillsides are covered with trees, skillfully planted in crevices and pockets of soil, many of which have been created artificially by terracing. The villagers reckon that they produce enough wheat to supply the community for about four months in the year; the rest has to be imported with money gained through the sale of olive oil.

Before the war, Kardamili added to its strictly agricultural resources by acting as a commercial center for a number of inland villages. They, too, exported olive oil, together with a few

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They came back to a village whose earlier means of livelihood was being undermined by new roads. As this fact became clear, emigration from the village commenced. Altogether, something like two hundred persons left the village between 1950 and 1956. Only one family went overseas, to Australia. The rest went either to Kalamata or to Athens. Among those who have remained in the village, a considerable number have undertaken seasonal migration to the Messenian plain in order to seek work with which to supplement the meager income from their olive trees in the village. The biggest single source of employment which has opened up in recent years is work in rice fields, developed in former salt marshes on the very edge of the Messenian plain. For the villagers of Kardamili these fields in Messenia have meant work and wages. Between eighty and ninety persons, both men and women, leave the village each year to help cultivate the rice fields. While working, they live in shanties or even out of doors, and return to their homes in Kardamili when work stops, or when something needs to be done on their own land.

Within the village there are variations in wealth, but no family has so much land as to need to hire labor. Indeed, the village secretary told me that the richest man in the village has only forty days' work a year on his olive trees, while nearly one third of all the village families own no land at all.

The only change that has come to the traditional agriculture of the community is the introduction of fertilizer, but few families use it. A common opinion holds that fertilizer is bad for the olive trees, and makes them short-lived by forcing an unnatural proliferation of fruit. A more sophisticated farmer told me that while the size of the fruit is increased by fertilizer, the quantity of oil is not increased in anything like the same proportion and its quality is lowered. Since the olive trees of this part of Greece are famous for the high quality of the oil they produce, which

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Kardamili

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were enrolled in the village primary school because boys from neighboring villages were in attendance. Within Kardamili, I was told, almost every boy goes through the first two years of gymnasium. Even without the final two years in Kalamata there is a chance, though not a good one, of finding a clerical job somewhere outside.

The other aspect of the adjustment characteristic of Nea Eleftherohori – postponement of marriage through the dowry system – is less advanced in Kardamili, but seems to be coming in. Dowries are rising, I was told, and even a man who owns no land himself may now ask a wife to bring him 2,000 okes of olive oil – the equivalent of several hundred dollars. This is a far cry from the huge sums expected in Nea Eleftherohori by a young man who is to inherit land; but what is significant is that before the war such demands were not being made in Kardamili. In those days a landless man would expect no more than a nominal dowry.

Village statistics did not show very convincingly any decrease in the birth rate, however. The decrease in numbers born no more than corresponded to the decline in the village population. Moreover, the decrease in deaths was more rapid than any change in the number of births – owing, mainly, to the elimination of malaria – so that the rate of natural increase of the population had actually risen between 1947 and 1956. So far, it would appear, the villagers have not felt it necessary to change their family customs very profoundly. Migration, facilitated by education, has sufficed to relieve intolerable conditions. The more drastic step of postponing marriage has not become generally necessary.

In poor villages deeper into Mani, these processes have gone much further. In one that I visited only briefly, Yerolimini, I was told that "no" young men are left in the village: all have gone to seek their fortunes in Piraeus, where this village has

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established a sort of colony of its own. Girls have been left behind, to pine as old maids, or else to marry some boy from one of the even poorer villages high in the hills – boys who are prepared to come down and cultivate the olive trees belonging to the families of the absent young men in return for a share of the crop.

One of the grievances that other Greeks have against the Maniotes (as people from Mani are called), and against the Peloponnesians in general, is that they dominate the civil service of the country. There is some truth in this complaint. The population of these parts has never quarreled with the powers that be; the people are nearly all royalist and conservative. And they cultivate, to a degree remarkable even among the Greeks, a clannishness which leads them to help one another as against natives of other parts of Greece. The gendarmerie, for example, is recruited in disproportionate part from among Maniotes, and the same is true of several other branches of the governmental service. It is, therefore, a bit easier for a person from this section to get a government job than it would be for a man from another part of the country. Villages like Yerolimini make the most of this fact. It looks as though Kardamili, a bit belatedly, is attempting to do the same. But one cannot help wondering what will happen when the graduates of Kardamili and Nea Eleftherohori and of hundreds of similar villages begin to compete for positions in the government. There can hardly be room for them all.

If these six villages were well chosen, if their reactions to the difficulties of the last few years in Greece represent widespread phenomena and not merely local idiosyncracies, then it seems clear that neither American nor Greek official policy has been able to do much to solve the problems of the hill villages. If a peaceable solution is to come, it seems probable that it will

/11 cont: /
conditions under which they had to move. At the present time there is some kind of temporary mobility such as working in other villages or sections for wages but they return back /12/ home again. The type of land distribution obliges every farmer to stay where he is. No one is allowed to sell his land nor hire it to anyone else. As soon as he does this he loses his ownership. With the increasing population and with ever-decreasing returns from the soil the future may present us with great mobility problems of the young men.

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Kinship Groups.

Kinship group solidarity is very strong among Caucasians and less among Thracians. Due to the compound family system which has already broken down since the distribution of the land by the government, one finds neighborhoods with strong kinship ties. Next to the family is the kinship group. Intermarriage is prohibitive among these groups. The kinship group is very different from the usual type that we know. If there is a widow or orphans or aged men or women, members of the kinship group feel under sacred obligation to care for them as they would do for the members of their family.

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Historical Background.

We do not have any historical data to show us the date of the first settlers of this village but the new /13/ resettlers came in 1922. It had had three different conquerors; the Turks in 1448, the Bulgarians in 1912, and the Greeks in 1913. It also served as the headquarters of Allied armies of the First World War. The trenches that surround it and the heavy concrete fortifications show its importance as a military post. People have come and gone. Nationals changed hands of the village, but the storks still find the same trees and roofs for their nests convenient, regardless of the nationality of the inhabitants. If the storks could speak the language they would tell the people of the futility of the differentiating nationalism. Houses were torn down and new ones built.

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